



Great Western Society Ltd (GWS)  
Didcot Railway Centre  
December 2020

**Salary:** c.£45,000 per annum  
**Hours:** Full-time (35 hours per week)  
**Location:** Didcot, Oxfordshire  
**Reports to:** GWS Board of Directors (via Chairman)

Welcome and thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive with the Great Western Society at Didcot Railway Centre. This is an exciting time to join the organisation, with the Society's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021, a dynamic and professional senior management team in place and an ambitious five-year business plan recently approved.

With the full support of the Board and Society membership, this role provides an excellent opportunity for a professional and driven individual to take Didcot Railway Centre to the next level.

As a unique heritage venue and Living Museum, the Railway Centre has enormous potential to grow levels of engagement, earned income and to provide a truly world-class experience for visitors and wider audiences.

I hope you will feel inspired to apply for this important role at such a significant time in the history of the Great Western Society.

Richard Preston  
Chair, Great Western Society

This application pack contains the following information:

1. Job description
2. Person Specification
3. About the Great Western Society and Didcot Railway Centre
4. How to apply

## 1. Job Description

The Great Western Society is looking for an individual who is ready to use their leadership and business development skills to continue the transformation of Didcot Railway Centre into a vibrant and sustainable heritage venue, as its dynamic Chief Executive. With diversity and excellence at its heart, the Railway Centre provides audiences with a world-class experience. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of effective management and results-driven leadership.

The CE will be responsible for:

1. Providing strong leadership
2. Working with the Board to develop medium and long-term strategies
3. The overall performance of the Great Western Society and Didcot Railway Centre
4. Health and Safety
5. Leading and delivering change
6. Managing a team of paid staff and volunteers

The CE will be supported by a committed team of staff and volunteers, GWS Directors and other stakeholders to deliver on a bold and ambitious vision for the organisation.

We are looking for a CE with experience across 6 key areas:

- 1. Entrepreneurship, business development and strategic planning**
- 2. People management**
- 3. Museums and heritage management and audience engagement**
- 4. Fundraising and partnership working**
- 5. Change management**
- 6. Communications and profile building**

The new post holder will join a small, dedicated and focused staff team and the large, highly experienced and committed community of volunteers. The organisation is passionate about ensuring many more individuals – of all ages and from all backgrounds – can access and be inspired by the heritage and history of the Great Western Railway and today's transport infrastructure which it made possible.

The post holder will be required to work flexibly, including some weekend and bank holiday working.

## **2. Person Specification**

Education, qualifications and knowledge:

- Degree in a relevant subject or a comparable level of knowledge acquired through experience
- Track record in business development and change management
- Knowledge of company, charity and employment law
- Current knowledge of the UK cultural and tourism sectors
- Knowledge and awareness of professional museum standards and their application
- Understanding of the importance of preserving historic and Accredited collections
- Knowledge of Health and Safety Management Systems

Experience:

- Senior management experience in a business, cultural, museum or heritage organisation or visitor attraction
- Experience of working effectively with a Board of Directors
- Managing and developing teams successfully, including voluntary staff
- Experience of driving business innovation and of measuring success
- Experience of successfully delivering major capital development projects
- Developing partnerships and successfully managing a wide range of stakeholder relationships
- Securing new investment from a wide range of sources
- Innovative business development and growth

Skills and abilities:

- The personal drive, passion and energy to create an inspirational vision and plan, and to oversee delivery against agreed targets
- Ability to motivate staff and volunteers to deliver on the shared organisational vision and objectives
- Fundraising and financial acumen, with the ability to generate income, set and manage budgets, and to grow activities that ensure a robust, sustainable and profitable business

- Ability to communicate effectively at Board level on business performance and key areas of risk
- A demonstrable empathy and enthusiasm for heritage and a real passion for sharing it with others
- To be a positive and effective ambassador for the GWS at all times
- Ability to build relationships with stakeholders and funders
- Manage multiple priorities and maintain focus in a varied and multifaceted environment
- Good interpersonal skills

### 3. About the Great Western Society Ltd and Didcot Railway Centre

The Great Western Society was formed in 1961 and moved to its current location, which has become Didcot Railway Centre, in 1967. The GWS preserves the history of the Great Western Railway at Didcot as a living museum occupying a 21-acre site in the heart of this historic Railway Junction town in South Oxfordshire. The Centre welcomes c.50,000 visitors per year ranging from families and school groups to historians and heritage rail enthusiasts.

Housing the largest collection of Great Western Railway engines, carriages, wagons and other artefacts, Didcot Railway Centre is also home to a working 1932 Coal Stage and Engine Shed (both Grade II listed). Ambitious plans for redevelopment of the site will see these buildings restored alongside the delivery of new buildings to ensure all visitors benefit from the best onsite experience possible.

Didcot Railway Centre is an Arts Council England Accredited Museum and is also home to the Great Western Trust, a charity that operates the Museum & Archive and the Swindon Panel Society.

Download the 2019/20 [GWS Annual Review](#) for additional information.

### Our Vision, Mission and Values

**Our vision** is for Didcot Railway Centre to be recognised for the international importance of its collection and the value of bringing to life the golden age of steam as a dynamic Living Museum.

**Our mission** is to fulfil our potential as a heritage venue at the centre of its community. Accessible to all, striving to engage and inspire the widest possible audiences in the history and heritage of the Great Western Railway – the pioneering transport infrastructure that laid the foundations for contemporary transport innovation.

### Values

Authentic | Welcoming | Engaging | Innovative | Great Quality | Sustainable.

### 4. How to apply

If you would like an informal discussion about the role please contact the current Chief Executive Emma Jhita on [emma.jhita@didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk](mailto:emma.jhita@didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk) or 01235 817200.

To apply please send a copy of your CV and a covering letter detailing your experience and explaining why you are the right person for this position. Applications should be emailed to [recruitment@didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk) by midday on 15 January 2021. Initial interviews will be scheduled for Monday 25 January, with second interviews w/c 1 February.

Please use the subject line 'Application: Chief Executive' and include details of two referees, your current salary and information regarding your availability. Please also state whether there are any restrictions on your right to work in the UK.

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form should also be completed and included with your application however this will not form any part of the interview decision-making process.

## **Safeguarding**

Didcot Railway Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all visitors, volunteers and staff. All staff are expected to share the same level of commitment and a DBS check may be required for successful applicants.

## **Equality Statement**

The Great Western Society (GWS) is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. Our aim is that the Society will be representative of all sections of society and that each member of staff and volunteer feels respected and able to give their best.